Cultural Resource Management

Understanding Diverse Perspectives

Kathy Kiefer

There comes a point in the business of managing cultural resources where we must take time to assess the results of our efforts. Somewhere between coordinating contracts with archeologists, meetings with agencies and tribes, document review and assessments, MOAs, and PAs, we must step back and ask, "how are these actions benefitting the resource?", and "whose resource are we managing?" The answers are reflected in the diversity of individuals whose lives and careers are dedicated to the protection of the nation's fragile and nonrenewable cultural heritage. There is a large picture here that also reflects the interests and passions of the public.

In an effort to develop a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the diversity of perspectives regarding the management of cultural resources, the Grant County Public Utility District sponsored a day-long forum during Washington State's first public archeology week. We decided to undertake an event that would provide the public, and those participating, with an opportunity to meet and listen to concerns expressed by each other. The result was a panel discussion among six Native Americans, five archeologists, and the public who participated as observers of the discussion between these two groups. The event was referred to as: *Forum: A Shared Past?* The Forum was designed around 16 questions presented to the panel beforehand. Each panel member had an opportunity to include or revise questions. Some of the questions were:

- What role do Native Americans want to play in educating the non-Indian public regarding archeological issues?
- How can (or have) archeologists integrated Native American concerns and views into their research analysis or publication?
- Does the Native American community feel that archeological publications have any value for future generations of Indian children?

The resulting exchange was a testimony of the intense feelings, and continued need for open dialogue between these seemingly disparate groups.

Panel members openly and courageously expressed their personal experiences, beliefs, fears, and hopes. The intense feelings and expressions of anxiety from panel members allowed the public to experience the depth of both sides of the issue. One high school student commented to a bystander that this was "really serious business." One member of the public asked the Indian community what they would like him to do if he came upon a site. Another member of the public demanded to know what would be left in a hundred years if archeologists continued to dig sites up?

The following is a summary of some of the ideas that came out of the forum.

A Native American looks at an archeological site and an artifact in a completely different way than an archeologist or cultural resource manager. Tony Washines, a Yakama elder, was eloquent in relating the meaning of a projectile point he found on the Columbia River; it did not belong to him, it belonged to a warrior from the past whose efforts to acquire food by the use of the point is part of a continuum of interrelatedness that goes on to this day. He expressed dismay at the way archeologists retrieve, measure, record and then store items from the past which don't belong to them.

Julie Stein, Curator of Archaeology at Seattle's Burke Museum, noted that in the past there has been a tendency by archeologists writing reports to strip the objects of people. She noted that archeology reports did tend to be object-oriented, referring to artifacts and deposits and not people.

Bob Mierendorf, a National Park Service archeologist, responded that the scientific aspect of archeological reports was established a hundred years ago and that the process has become institutionalized. He noted that many of these documents are unreadable by people who are not scientists. He added that he was trained as a scientist, and that however much he feels the need for the Indian community to provide their input, it would be inappropriate to look at artifacts through the eyes of the tribal communities. He went on to note that archeologists need to work with tribal communities because there are ways to get their story out.

Tony Washines responded by stating, "I'm not sure I can reconcile a hundred-year-old discipline with laws set down since time immemorial. It's hard for me to set

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Grant County Public Utility District

The Cultural Resource Program at the Grant County Public Utility District has grown and developed through a relationship with the Wanapum Indians upon whose ancestral winter home one of the utility's hydroelectric dams was built. The relationship is based on openness and dialogue, and a commitment to the protection of all the resources within the utility's two reservoirs. The cultural resource program includes the curation of several large collections of artifacts excavated from two reservoirs prior to inundation. A Wanapum Indian manages the artifact collections and provides advice and design ideas for exhibits in the Heritage Center museum which is operated at Wanapum Dam. The relationship which has developed over the last 30 years has taken a commitment by both groups to seek solutions that take into account the needs of future generations of electricity, consumers, and Wanapum Indians. The challenges they have faced together provide worthy experience which others may find useful to draw upon.

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aside my teachings, my values. Those things belong to the people, to my father's, father's, father's father. As I take my turn to step on the tracks they made, I do not go back by picking up those things that belonged to them."

Bob Mierendorf explained that many archeologists do little excavation, and that today research includes the documentation of traditional cultural properties which involves working closely with the tribes. He added that archeology can be an imposition to Native American people, but so is rapid development, highways and large federal undertakings. These, he noted, were greater impositions to cultural remains left in the ground than controlled excavations.

Leonard Forsman, a Suquamish Indian, added that his tribe has reaped the benefit of excavation which is proving, in the Washington state courts, Suquamish claims to their ancestral shell-fishing rights. The archeological evidence documents that the Suquamish people have obtained shellfish from a particular location for 2,000 years.

David Rice, A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers archeologist summed up his feelings by noting that archeologists and Native Americans need to keep communicating and building a shared sensitivity toward each other's needs.

The Forum was a first step toward developing a regional dialogue that will involve invested participants. Cultural resource management must, out of necessity, engage diverse perspectives. The results are an increase in understanding and sensitivity toward the resource by all parties. A greater commitment to protect the resource can be realized when individuals appreciate each other's interests and concerns. Cultural resource management is a process, not a result. It is a process that can be directed to include more than routine paperwork and compliance issues. It's a process that can engage the public with it's meaningful human and historic aspects. I asked Richard Buck, a Wanapum Indian who works in the cultural resource program at the Grant County P.U.D., to review this article. His comments, in summary, are as follows:

A resource is something you use, culture is something you live. In a way they conflict with each other. Maybe the work we do should be called cultural heritage management. When it comes to what is referred to as cultural resources from the Indian perspective, the term resource as reference to the land or material possessions that are held within it is not enough. Our heritage is rooted inextricably in the land: it is ancient and complex. What Western people consider as an economic or cultural resource are considered spiritual and inviolable by the Indian people. This is just something to keep in mind.

This is dialogue. This is the process. Ask the interested parties, share with them all aspects of the issue. The process will direct itself naturally in a way that the value of the resource, or heritage issue will be more fully appreciated. Engage the public, engage tribal members, engage each other. If we believe ourselves wise and courageous enough to accept the challenges and responsibilities of protecting this nation's cultural heritage, then involve all of those who care, and the children and grandchildren of those whose legacy we now regard as our purview.

Kathy Kiefer is the cultural resource supervisor for the Grant County Public Utility District. Richard Buck is a cultural specialist.